

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 4-29 are in the application. Claims 1, 17, 19, 22, 23, 24 are hereby amended, and claims 9 and 21 are cancelled without prejudice. Claim 21 has been cancelled to narrow issues for appeal and to advance prosecution. No new matter is believed added.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1 and 3-24. The Examiner has not indicated whether claims 25-29 (newly-presented in Applicant's previous response) are allowed or rejected, and Applicants respectfully request examination of those claims. The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 4-20, and 22-24 as obvious over Pizano (US Patent No. 5,293,429) in view of Saito (US Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0042083). Claim 21 is rejected as being obvious over Pizano in view of Rhodes (US Patent No. 6,236,768).

Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections. A brief review of some embodiments of the present invention may be helpful in understanding some of the differences between the instant invention and the Pizano reference. Embodiments of the present invention relate to document storage and retrieval systems that, for example, allow a company to store and categorize a large number of documents for retrieval and review. As a specific example, a legal department of a company may use embodiments of the present invention to store, categorize, and retrieve individual contracts and agreements for the company. A new contract can be added to the system by creating an image or providing a copy of the contract and then selecting a template based on a classification of the document to be stored (such as "Contracts -- Vendor"). A user enters information about the document into the template and submits the information, causing a "pending" record to be created. The information in the pending record is verified (e.g., for accuracy and completeness and to ensure the information is not redundant with other information previously provided), and only after the pending record has been verified is an "active" record generated. Only "active" records are available for searching and retrieval by a user. In this manner, embodiments allow the accurate, consistent, and reliable entry and classification of documents and document information.

These features are recited in claim elements of independent claim 1 which has been amended to clarify that some embodiments employ a template, document information (entered by a user based on the type of the document and based on the template), and a document (an

image of which may be associated with a “pending” record of “document information” submitted via the template). These three items are used to create a pending record that, if approved, is converted to an “active” record that may be searched by users.

The Examiner asserts that the combination of the Pizano and Saito references teach or suggest such a system. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, and respectfully assert that the Examiner misconstrues the teachings of the Pizano reference.

A review of the Pizano reference shows that Pizano relates to image processing techniques. In particular, Pizano describes a system for performing image processing of business forms that operates as follows: (1) a template or reference form (i.e., a form that has known features) is imaged to create a form dictionary; (2) actual business forms are scanned to create an image; (3) features of the actual business form are extracted; (4) the extracted features are compared to features stored in the form dictionary to locate a form template that matches; and (5) the actual business form is identified based on the match. (See, e.g., Col. 2, line 56- Col. 3, line 2, and the remainder of the detailed description). Put another way, Pizano creates a database of known forms, and then, in operation, compares images of scanned forms to identify a type of the scanned form by comparing the scanned form with the database. This allows Pizano to identify a scanned credit card receipt as being a particular type of form – a credit card receipt.

The Examiner points to Pizano’s Abstract, Col. 2 lines 38-55 and Col. 10, lines 32-43 as teaching the steps of identifying a template based on a classification of a document to be stored, generating a pending record, and generating an active record if a step of verifying is successful. (Office Action at page 3). A review of the portions of Pizano (and the rest of Pizano’s disclosure) shows no such teaching. Instead, the disclosure at Col. 2 and Col. 10 is seen as describing two basic steps of “business form recognition” which include “training” (creating a form dictionary of known form types), and “classification” (comparing actual production forms to the dictionary forms to find a match). There is simply no teaching or suggestion in the cited sections of Pizano (or elsewhere in Pizano) to provide a document management system that uses a template that is selected based on a classification of a document to be stored, where the template is used to direct a user to enter particular document information, where the document information is included in a pending data record that is then associated with an image of the

document, and where the pending record is converted to an active record that is searchable upon verification of the document information. Each of these steps are recited in claim 1 as amended.

Even if Saito were properly combined with Pizano (which Applicants respectfully suggest is not proper), the combination fails to teach or suggest embodiments of the present invention at least because both the Saito reference fails to makeup for the above-noted deficiencies of Pizano.

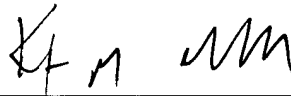
The Examiner cites the Saito reference as teaching the use of templates to direct a user to enter data. Applicants agree that Saito generally describes the use of templates to direct data entry, however, Applicants are not claiming such a technique on it's own. Instead, in claim 1, Applicants are claiming a particular system that uses a template that is selected based on a classification of a document to be stored, where the template is used to direct a user to enter particular document information, where the document information is included in a pending data record that is then associated with an image of the document, and where the pending record is converted to an active record that is searchable upon verification of the document information. While Saito may describe the use of templates to enter information, Saito does not teach the use of a template that is selected based on a classification of a document to be stored. Saito also does not teach that document information is used in a pending data record that is associated with an image of a document and further does not teach that the pending record is converted to an active record that is searchable upon verification of the document information. At least because these claimed features are not taught or suggested by the cited references (alone or in any combination), claim 1 is believed patentable. The other independent claims have been amended in a similar manner and are believed patentable for similar reasons. Each of the dependent claims is believed patentable at least as depending from patentable base claims.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of the pending claims. If any issues remain, or if the Examiner has any further suggestions for expediting allowance of the present application, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned via telephone at (203) 972-0081.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date



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